

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (previously presented) A system for processing a pre-formed plastic container filled with a hot product, comprising:

hot filling means for filling a rigid container body of the pre-formed plastic container with the hot product in a production line, the rigid container body having a surface surrounding an interior of the rigid container body and having a projection extending from the rigid container body;

means for capping a neck of the filled rigid container body with a cap in the next operation of the production line;

means for transporting through the production line the pre-formed plastic container having the projection extending from the rigid container body;

means for supporting, during the transporting, the rigid container body having the projection extending from the rigid container body;

means for cooling the rigid container body of the pre-formed plastic container filled with the hot product; and

means for pushing the projection extending from the cooled rigid container body into the interior of the rigid container body so that the resultant, filled and cooled rigid container body is relatively free of structural geometry over a substantial portion of the surface.

2. (previously presented) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 1, wherein, when the rigid container body is cooled by said means for cooling, the cooling produces a vacuum within the rigid container body, and substantially all of the vacuum is taken up by the pushing.

3. (previously presented) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 1, further comprising means for blow-molding a parison to form the rigid container body, where the rigid container body has the neck, a shoulder area, a base, and a smooth side surface surrounding the interior of the rigid container body, and the projection extends from the base of the rigid container body before the filling begins.

4. (previously presented) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 3, further comprising:

means for inverting the projection extending from the rigid container body into the interior of the rigid container body in the next operation of the production line after the parison is blow-molded; and

means for repositioning the projection of the rigid container body with a force prior to the filling by said filling means for filling so that the projection moves outside of the rigid container body and extends from the rigid container body.

5. (previously presented) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 1, wherein the rigid container body with the projection

extending from the rigid container body is conveyed by its neck during the filling and capping.

Claims 6-8. (cancelled)

9. (previously presented) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 1, wherein the means for pushing the projection extending from the cooled rigid container body into the interior of the rigid container body is configured to position an actuator panel with projections extending therefrom underneath a container holding device where the projections of the actuator panel correspond with container body projections through a respective opening of the container holding device;

further comprising means for moving the actuator panel so that the actuator panel projections push against the container body projections thereby forcing the container body projections inside respective rigid container bodies.

10. (previously presented) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 1, wherein the rigid container body has a grip portion in addition to the substantial portion of the surface that is relatively free of structural geometry.

Claim 11. (cancelled)

12. (currently amended) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim [[2]]1, further comprising at least a mini vacuum panel,

wherein the pushing of the projection takes up ~~the~~ a majority of ~~the~~ a resultant vacuum caused by the cooling, and the mini vacuum panel takes up the remainder of the vacuum.

Claims 13-54. (cancelled)

55. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 1, wherein, during the transporting, said means for supporting does not support the plastic container by the projection.

56. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 1, wherein said means for supporting supports the rigid container body having the projection extending therefrom by a standing surface thereof, the standing surface being distinct from the projection.

57. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 56, wherein said means for supporting supports the rigid container body having the projection extending therefrom by the standing surface thereof prior to said means for pushing pushing the projection into the interior of the rigid container body.

58. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 1, wherein, during the transporting a portion of the projection extends from the rigid container body below a standing ring.

59. (new) A system for processing a pre-formed plastic container filled with a hot product, comprising:

hot filling means for filling a container body of the pre-formed plastic container with the hot product in a production line, the container body having a surface surrounding an interior of the container body and having a projection extending from the container body;

means for capping a neck of the filled container body with a cap in the next operation of the production line;

means for transporting through the production line the pre-formed plastic container having the projection extending from the container body;

means for supporting, during the transporting, the container body having the projection extending from the container body;

means for cooling the container body of the pre-formed plastic container filled with the hot product; and

means for pushing the projection extending from the cooled container body into the interior of the container body so that the resultant, filled and cooled container body is relatively free of structural geometry over a substantial portion of the surface.

60. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 59, wherein, when the container body is cooled by said means for cooling, the cooling produces a vacuum within the container body, and substantially all of the vacuum is taken up by the pushing.

61. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 59, further comprising means for blow-molding a parison to form the container body, where the container body has the neck, a shoulder area, a base, and a smooth side surface surrounding the interior of the container body, and the projection extends from the base of the container body before the filling begins.

62. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 60, further comprising:

means for inverting the projection extending from the container body into the interior of the container body in the next operation of the production line after the parison is blow-molded; and

means for repositioning the projection of the container body with a force prior to the filling by said filling means for filling so that the projection moves outside of the container body and extends from the container body.

63. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 57, wherein the container body with the projection extending from the container body is conveyed by its neck during the filling and capping.

64. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 57, wherein the means for pushing the projection extending from the cooled container body into the interior of the container body is configured to position an actuator panel with projections extending therefrom underneath a container holding device where

the projections of the actuator panel correspond with container body projections through a respective opening of the container holding device;

further comprising means for moving the actuator panel so that the actuator panel projections push against the container body projections thereby forcing the container body projections inside respective container bodies.

65. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 59, wherein the container body has a grip portion in addition to the substantial portion of the surface that is relatively free of structural geometry.

66. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 59, further comprising at least a mini vacuum panel, wherein the pushing of the projection takes up a majority of a resultant vacuum caused by the cooling, and the mini vacuum panel takes up the remainder of the vacuum.

67. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 59, wherein, during the transporting, said means for supporting does not support the plastic container by the projection.

68. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 59, wherein said means for supporting supports the container body having the projection extending therefrom by a standing surface thereof, the standing surface being distinct from the projection.

69. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 68, wherein said means for supporting supports the container body having the projection extending therefrom by the standing surface thereof prior to said means for pushing pushing the projection into the interior of the container body.

70. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 59, wherein, during the transporting a portion of the projection extends from the container body below a standing surface.

71. (new) The system for processing a pre-formed plastic container according to claim 59, wherein the container body is rigid.